

ABSTRACT

A method and system are described for highly declarative specification of master-detail applications of relational databases, by end users who need not be trained in programming or in database administration. The method and system includes a notation in which end users can specify applications using their own English words and phrases, and by using place holders that are set out on indented lines to specify a master-detail hierarchy. The invention improves on the prior art by allowing a wider range of applications to be specified without programming, and without work by database administrators. The invention also improves on the prior art by automatically generating explanations showing what parts of the specification, and what supporting facts from the database, have been used in obtaining an answer to a question.